

F

535

G.3F2

GERMAN DAY CELEBRATION.

ADDRESS BY CHARLES W. FAIRBANKS.



Class F 34

Book 100

ADDRESS
OF
CHARLES W. FAIRBANKS

AT THE
GERMAN DAY CELEBRATION

INDIANAPOLIS, SEPTEMBER 3, 1899.

WASHINGTON, D. C. :
GIBSON BROS., PRINTERS AND BOOKBINDERS.
1899.

MR. CHAIRMAN, LADIES AND GENTLEMEN :

I wish in the first place to thank Captain Bieler and those associated with him for the magnificent success of to-day. I never have seen a celebration more perfect in all its appointments. My profound congratulations are extended to these gentlemen.

You do well to celebrate German Day—the day when the first German emigrants landed on American soil. It was an event of great historical significance ; of importance to the emigrants themselves and of no less importance to the country ; and while gratitude (which is among the sweetest of human virtues) presides in our hearts, we should not cease to remember or fittingly to commemorate it.

By celebrating it you do not thereby become less Americans ; for as much as you love the German fatherland, you nevertheless love the United States before and above all else, and cherish her beneficent institutions.

This is indeed a fit occasion upon which to acknowledge the supremacy of American institutions and proclaim anew our undying pride and glory in American citizenship. Great and splendid it is to be a German citizen, but greater and still more splendid it is to be an American citizen. No matter whether you are from Germany or from Ireland or from England or from France ; no matter from what country you may come, your proudest boast is that you are an American citizen, and that you are enamoured of the institutions of the great republic.

The celebration of this day serves to exalt our love for America rather than to diminish it.

America ! The sublimest word in the human tongue ! What limitless opportunities are here. The way to place and power is alike open to the lowest and the highest ; to

L. of C.

native and foreign-born alike. But one avenue of civic distinction is closed to those of alien birth, and that is the chief magistracy of the United States.

Who can measure the beneficent influence of those of German blood in American life? No power short of Omnipotence can do this. There are in the United States eight million people who speak the German language. More citizens here trace their lineage to German parentage than the combined populations of the brave little republic of Switzerland and the Netherlands, which had such tremendous influence upon our institutions and political ideas; or than the total populations of Norway and Sweden, whence have come some of our sturdiest and best citizens. There are in New York city, that great commercial metropolis of the Western continent, five hundred and eighty thousand Germans, or nearly one-third as many Germans as there are in the great capital of the German empire; and almost as many as there are, all told, in the city of Hamburg.

The principal German emigration to the port of New York occurred between 1821 and July, 1899. During this period of seventy-eight years, the number of arrivals was 5,010,880 souls. They came upon no temporary mission; they came with no divided allegiance; they came to become home builders; they came to become republic builders. They brought here their attachment to country; their devotion to law; their love of liberty, and their passion for music. The historian cannot write the history of our matchless and marvelous development and leave out the sturdy immigrants from all countries, and more especially from the German, the British, and the Scandinavian countries. Here upon this Western continent, the best blood of the nations of the earth has met and fused into the American citizen. The transmutation has challenged the surprise and excited the admiration of the world. There

has been no blood richer or more welcome than that which flows in German veins.

Who takes more pride in our country than those of German birth who have given to it their allegiance? The Germans naturally loved independence and liberty, and came instinctively to love the flag. Thousands of the flower of German youth came here after the revolution of 1848 in search of that liberty which was denied them in the fatherland. Brave, intelligent, loving liberty as the very air, they added to the great and honorable figures in American history.

We have needed their plain, practical and conservative habits. In business they have been laborious and industrious; they have succeeded in the face of great obstacles and serious discouragements. They have educated their children—it has been a part of the German creed to educate—herein lies the secret of their power. The German policy has been to lay up something against the rainy day; to provide against old age and its inevitable infirmities. The helpfulness of the Germans toward each other has been one of the splendid lessons they have taught. Fidelity is always an admirable trait. The fidelity of Germans toward each other has been to me always one of their striking and admirable characteristics.

The Germans are found in every avenue of usefulness—doing their full duty as loyal American citizens. They have taken a conspicuous place at the bar; they preside in our courts of justice; they participate in politics; they have contributed some of the foremost statesmen in the history of the Government; they fill chairs in our great universities; they occupy the pulpit; they have increased the power of the press; they have added to our literature; they have helped to fell the forest and reclaim the waste places; they have been upon the frontier line of civilization, and, in brief, they are found in every branch of in-

tellectual and commercial activity. Whenever the call to arms has come, they have marched down to the battlefields of the republic, and shown the world how patriots can do and die.

We have been engaged in no war in which those of German ancestry have not borne their full share of the burden. They have never failed to respond to the first call to arms. They won the gratitude of Washington and the country in the war of the Revolution. Their spirit was personified by the intrepid patriot, the young German minister, Peter G. Muhlenberg, who exchanged the dress of his high and holy calling for a colonel's uniform, and for his bravery became a major-general in the Continental army. You have well recalled his services to his country to-day. No monument can be too imposing for him; no tribute too lofty. And there were Baron de Kalb and Baron von Steuben—whose names will ever be gratefully remembered as among the most illustrious of our Revolutionary heroes.

The war of 1812 witnessed the heroic allegiance of those of German parentage. In 1846 they marched with our victorious armies into Mexico.

The muster rolls of the civil war contain the names of a mighty army of German extraction. About one hundred and eighty-seven thousand offered their services to their country in the field, and many of them gave the last full measure of their devotion in support of the cause of the Union in every heroic charge from Bull Run to Appomattox.

When the war with Spain came, there were no more stalwart supporters of the Government than our German fellow-citizens. They knew that the issues of the war were not party issues. They knew that the President had sought, by every means consistent with the national honor, to effect a peaceful settlement of the troubles in Cuba, and when nothing was left but war, they offered their services. All of their hopes, all of their prayers were for the triumph of our arms.

As one of the results of the war, our flag was carried into the Philippines. It went upon no mission of vengeance against the Filipinos. It went to overthrow Spanish authority, which had been maintained for upward of three hundred years. Our flag went as the symbol of the power and authority of the Government. It is there lawfully in pursuance of the cession of the treaty of peace. The treaty of peace was ratified by the Senate of the United States, after full debate, after deliberate consideration, and by virtue of its ratification and exchange the possession of the islands passed to the jurisdiction of the United States.

While the treaty of peace was under consideration, and before its ratification, Aguinaldo and his deluded followers fired upon our soldiers, and undertook to drive them from the islands. They fired upon the flag, which meant to them deliverance from Spanish tyranny, all of which was in direct and positive rebellion against the authority of the Government. No course, therefore, was left open to the President but to subdue the rebellion and compel recognition of the authority and jurisdiction of the United States. This presents no party question. It is a question that is far above and beyond party. It is purely and simply a question as to whether or not the United States shall maintain its right and supremacy in the territory which has been lawfully committed to its authority and keeping.

No one need have fear that the Government will not deal justly and honorably with the Filipinos or that it will not give to them the fullest and amplest measure of self-government, consistent with their ability to enjoy it, and with honor and the utmost good faith.

I think I correctly interpret the sentiments of our brethren of German blood when I say that they are willing to support and uphold the Government of the United States in its duty and determination to compel every one in revolt against its authority to lay down his arms, and acknowledge the

sovereignty, the power and the justice of the great republic.

Since the occurrence of the great events of the last few months we have come to be recognized as one of the great powers of the earth. We have international responsibilities of vast moment. We have been moving forward in the extension of our commerce with foreign countries in a manner and to a degree unexcelled in all our past history. It is, therefore, the part of wisdom, it is a part of good business policy, to put it upon no higher ground, to cultivate cordial relations with all countries with which we are engaged in commerce. Trade and traffic will be stimulated between friendly powers much more readily and more to the advantage of both, than is possible where friction and enmity exist between them.

We have a large commerce with Germany, which good relations will tend to promote; but beyond this, and above this, we are bound together by thousands of ties of kinship and association which should stimulate relations of enduring cordiality.

I have no sort of sympathy with those who for some occult reason are attempting to foment discord between the United States and the German empire. There is no reason why these two great nations should not continue to exist upon terms of amity. We should cultivate friendly relations not only with Germany, but with all the other great powers of the earth. We can never forget—at least we never should forget—that Frederick the Great was the first to recognize the birth of the republic out of the throes of the Revolution; and that during the great civil war we had little to encourage us among many of the European powers, but Germany never ceased to manifest her belief in the eternal justice, and her faith in the ultimate triumph of our cause.

The Germans are usually found on the side of good gov-

ernment. They carry into the service of the state the same wholesome, practical ideas of economy and loyalty to trust which they practice in their domestic affairs. They hold public officials to a high accountability, and this is well. Official place is a trust of the highest moment, and should be executed not for the exploitation of personal selfish ends, or for personal aggrandizement, but for the advancement and promotion of the interests of the entire body politic, and for the glory of the state. Breach of public trust should rank among the unpardonable sins. An official who will win the public confidence and basely betray it, is unworthy to enjoy the priceless boon of American citizenship, and should be whipped out of place and power.

We hear much in these latter days of the tendency toward materialism. There is no doubt much foundation for this. The Germans have taught us, perhaps, as much, or more, than any one else, that there is much beyond that which is essentially materialistic.

Though two hundred and sixteen years have passed since the landing of the first German immigrants, our country is but yet in its infancy ; its possibilities are yet unexplored ; a sublime destiny lies before us. Let us inculcate principles of justice and charity for each other, and an unquenchable love of liberty, if we would attain to the highest possible progress.

I trust that we shall retire from the interesting and impressive events of this holy day with a greater respect for all our countrymen, a greater love for the republic, and with a determination to preserve, unimpaired, its honor and glory.

An incident of the day was a serenade by Director Ehr Gott and the singing societies. Responding to the compliment, Mr. Fairbanks said :

Gentlemen of the singing societies, I thank you from the depths of a grateful heart for this splendid serenade ; was there ever sweeter music ? I have wondered often why the Almighty, in His infinite and beneficent providence, dowered the Germans above all others with musical gifts—with the passion of music. If I have no voice such as yours, still I have an ear to hear and a heart to understand your inspiring music. Again I thank you.

LIBRARY OF CONGRESS



0 014 753 958 7

